Bull Moose Jackson

CLUB LINGERIE, LOS ANGELES — Bull Moose Jackson returned to Southern California after an absence that spanned over two-and-a-half decades and the capacity crowd at L.A.'s Club Lingerie let him know it had definitely been too long.

Bull Moose Jackson is an undisputed groundbreaker in Rhythm and Blues. In 1947 he became the first R&B artist to receive a gold record, awarded for his record, "I Love You, Yes I Do." Other songs which brought him notoriety include, "Big Ten Inch Record" (subsequently covered by Aerosmith in the late '70s) and "I Want A Bowlegged Woman."

In November 1983, Carl M. Grefensette (who is the drummer for The Flashcats, the band that is responsible for Bull Moose's re-emergence and his backing ensemble at The Lingerie), discovered Jackson working for a Washington, D.C. food service. Grefensette brought the singer to Pittsburgh for a show with The Flashcats where he proceeded to bring down the house. From that point on Bull Moose Jackson was back.

When Bull Moose Jackson took the stage it was obvious "Moosemania" had swept the Lingerie. Jackson jumped into a medley of his classics — "Bowlegged Woman," "Sneaky Pete" and "I Love You, Yes I Do," to name just a few. Despite his long hiatus from the stage, it was apparent that Bull Moose Jackson still had those pipes. The crowd was jumping.

It is obvious the 65-year-old singer's true love is performing. He was openly ecstatic about the night's turnout and joked how only he and Joe Turner, who was sitting in the audience, were probably the only ones at the club that night who could remember when he was in his heyday.

The highlight of the evening was a sing-along rendition of the Moose's latest single on Bogus Records. (Yes, that's Bogus Records), "Get Off the Table Mabel (The Two Dollars Is For The Beer)." It was at this point that the bond between performer and audience had been cemented. The chorus could be heard out on Sunset Blvd.

By the end of the night, the small table set up in the back of the club had sold out of Bull Moose Jackson T-Shirts (I bought two) and copies of the new single. As he descended the stage, the Moose was surrounded by fans seeking autographs. There was an undeniable gleam on Bull Moose Jackson's face as he signed the singles and conversed with his fans. Suddenly 1947 didn't seem so far away.

david adelson

X

ARLINGTON THEATRE, SANTA BARBARA — While X, long a critic's favorite with a commercial cult following, usually releases a new album each fall, it has not had a new album since September of 1983. Yet the lack of new material didn't seem to faze the hysterical throngs which greeted the band here. Opening with the political anthem "The New World" X proved that it has the intensity and sheer velocity to rock with America's best.

The personas might be the same: Exene as the flailing and often atonal foil to John Doe's anchoring bass and lead vocals rich with conviction; Billy Zoom as the seemingly disinterested guitar idol and the unassuming D. J. Bonebrake pounding out the beat on a minimalist drum kit, but X has evolved greatly since its early days at the Masque in Hollywood. Forays into heavy metal-punk have always been apparent — "Nausea" from the band's Slash debut — but its cover of "Wild Thing" vaulted X onto many AOR playlists when it was released as a 12"last year and on this night almost brought the house down.

As the band's principal writers, Doe and Exene have always written honestly about their lives (sometimes *excruciatingly*) and with the break-up of their marriage in the last year the group's new material has reflected the emotional sores which go along with the situation. New material such as "Little Honey" cowritten by Dave Alvin and also appearing on the Blaster's upcoming disc, "What's Wrong With Me" and others are typically brutal and insightful visions which gained surprisingly enthusiastic responses from the mostly young crowd.

Yet it was explosive X classics such as "Make The Music Go Bang" "Devil Doll" "White Girl" and "In This House That I Call Home" which ignited the audience. The band seemed in an especially good mood, away from its typical home crowd and guitarist Zoom even made a series of rare forays into single-string leads. Bonebrake played typically crushing drums and the Exene-Doe vocalizing was more consistent than usual. Clearly the duo's work with the acoustic outfit The Knitters has brought about a more intimate singing style which seems to work well in the decidely electric X. Drawing healthily from each of the band's four previous Slash and Elektra LPs as well as working in six new songs, X proved again why it is one of the most vital bands working today.

Opener Los Lobos has been recently reviewed on these pages and the group overcame a bad mix to finish its set with typical celebration and intensity.

peter holden

***GOOD TIMES** — Columbia Recording artist Nina Hagen recently took her Ballroom Blitz to Los Angeles' Beverly Theater to headline two sold-out shows entitled "A Salute To Glitter." Ms. Hagen's new Columbia LP, "Balhaus Blitz Exstasy No. 5" will be available in February. Among the visitors at the after-concert party were Rodney Bingenheimer (co-M.C. of the show), L.A. Songstress Angelyne and local TV horror movie hostess Elvira (Cassandra Peterson).*

***BRASS MEETS BRASS** — Capitol Records execs congratulated Brass Construction backstage after its WBLS-sponsored Red Parrot concert in support of its "Renegades" album. Pictured (l-r) are Varnell Johnson, vp of A&R, black music division; Brass Construction members Sandy Billups and Morris Price; Don Grierson, senior vp, A&R; Brass Construction members Larry Paxton and Randy Muller; Rod Butler, NY R&B promotion manager; and Jesse Ward, Brass Construction.*

Violent Femmes

THE BEVERLY THEATRE, L.A. — The Violent Femmes descended on Los Angeles with all the pagentry and splendor of a gypsy/hobo reunion. The rag-tag ensemble led by impish Gordon Gano with Brian Ritchie on bass and Victor De Lorenzo on drums played to a capacity house at the Beverly Theatre. The band was supplemented by The Horns Of Dilemma featuring John Zorn, John Tanner and Sigmund Snopek.

When one approaches the Violent Femmes one is faced with a category unlike any other. In its broadcast reading, the "pop music" tag is simply inadequate. There are certainly the usual pop acoutrements; electric guitars, horns, etc.; it comes packaged like a pop group with LPs, posters and buttons and its audience is a mix of dark creatures from the street and trendy new-wave kids. But the music is strange, perplexing and bizarre. It is music sprung right out of the American psyche. It is music informed by folk legend, the southern voodoo, the snake-charmers of Appalachia, black superstitution and suburban trauma.

And if this weren't jarring enough there is a Christian faith which weaves in and out of the music. One moment we're dropping our lovely daughter in a well ("Country Death Song"), the next we're singing along to a Gospel song, "I believe in the Father/I believe in the Son/I believe there's a Spirit/Livin' in everyone." This is a dark faith, like Dante's *Inferno*. The Violent Femmes' music is that of a tormented soul crying out for relief, the voice of every dispossessed loner in every bus station in America.

But there is a joy and purity also, the kind felt when one exposes privately held dark secrets and comes out intact. There is nothing alive in the heart of man so ugly as to cut him off from the grace of God.

The Violent Femmes were ably supported by Carmine De Forest, whose satirical, jaundiced view of industrial romance make him the ukelele-playing Tiny Tim of the '80s and And And And, a crafty quartet long on style but a little short on substance. They are worth keeping an eye on.

stephen padgett

***CINEMA SISTER** — Twisted Sister's Jay Jay French appeared at Plitt's Water Tower Theatre in Chicago to see the band's "We're Not Gonna Take It" as a Music Motions Music Zap on the wide screen. The Zap opened before* Johnny Dangerously.

1985.02.02 Jay Jay French Photo, Cashbox